DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 359 488 CS 011 343

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TITLE Parental Involvement and Its Relationship to Second Graders' Reading Achievement.
PUB DATE Jun 93
NOTE 60p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Early Intervention; *Elementary School Students; *Grade 2; Intelligence Quotient; Oral Reading; *Parent Participation; *Parent Student Relationship; Primary Education; *Reading Achievement; Reading Readiness; Reading Skills; Student Evaluation; Teacher Role; Theory Practice Relationship
IDENTIFIERS Ohio

ABSTRACT

A study examined the correspondence between parent involvement and second graders' reading achievement. It also examined the relationship between students' IQ scores and their reading achievement. Evaluation instruments included the SAT and the O-LSAT. Parents completed a parent involvement questionnaire, and two key informants were interviewed. The study, conducted with 22 second-grade students and their parents in rural southeastern Ohio, concluded that no positive significant correlation exists between parents' involvement and students' reading achievement nor do students with higher IQ scores necessarily have parents who are more involved in their education. The study further concluded that students with higher IQ scores tend to score higher on reading achievement. (Six tables of data are included. A questionnaire and interview questions, as well as an 11-item bibliography are attached.) (SAM)

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PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SECOND-GRADERS' READING ACHIEVEMENT

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JUNE, 1993

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PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SECOND-GRADERS' READING ACHIEVEMENT

ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study

Many students do not reach their highest potential in reading, because they need additional guidance from their parents they are not receiving. The purpose of this study was to determine whether there was a coorelationship between parent involvement and first graders' reading achievement. It also examined the relationship between IQ scores and reading achievement.

Literature Review

Learning to read can be a very complex and often undefinable process in which a child develops into an emerging reader. The literature emphasizes the importance of parental involvement in the education of children. Parent involvement begins at birth and continues throughout the education of the child. The early years are the most impressionable.

Parent involvement encompasses many areas: history of parental involvement, home environment and child factors such as IQ and gender, the teachers' perspective, the parents' perspective, the barriers to good involvement, how teachers can get parents involved, and ways parents can help.

Parents are a child's first and most important teachers. Therefore, nurturing literacy from an early age is important. Parents can do this in many ways. Reading aloud, verbally interacting with the child, and providing the child with a knowledge of their world will help the child become a reader.

Participants of the Study

Participants in this study were 22 second grade students attending an elementary school in southeastern Ohio. The elementary school is located in a rural area. The elementary school educates kindergarten through fourth grade, and approximately 500 students are instructed in the building.

Methodology

Data Collection

This study investigated the relationship between parent involvement and reading achievement. It examined the relationship between children's IQ score and reading achievement. It also examined the relationship between children's IQ and parent involvement. Two tests, SAT and the O-LSAT were administered to 22 second grade students in the beginning of their second grade year. The SAT measures reading achievement, while the O-LSAT measure IQ. Each of the 22 students was also given a questionnaire about parent involvement to be completed by the students' parents. Also, two key informants were interviewed.

Data Analysis

Data analysis occurred in April of the students' second grade year. At this time, two key informants were interviewed and the questionnaire was given to the 22 subjects. Correlational analysis was used as a method to analyze the relationship between parent involvement and children's reading achievement, children's IQ and reading achievement, and children's IQ and parent involvement.

Also, it was noted the relationship between parent involvement and children's reading achievement was not statistically significant ($r = .16$). The relationship between children's IQ and reading achievement was significant ($r = .69$). The relationship between parent involvement and children's IQ was not signficant ($r = .02$).

Results and Conclusions

No significance was found between parental involvement and reading achievement. Therefore, the original hypothesis was rejected. It was concluded that if the sample size had been larger, the relationship might have been a signifcant one. A significant correlation was found between reading achievement and children's IQ. This hypothesis was supported, and it was concluded that children with higher IQ scores will achieve higher reading achievement scores. No significant relationship was found between parent involvement and children's IQ. Therefore, children's IQ does not relate to their parents' involvement in their education.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES ix

LIST OF FIGURES x

CHAPTER

I. THE PROBLEM 1

Purpose of the Study 2

Statement of the Problem 3

General Hypotheses and Research Questions 3

Definitions of Terms 4

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE 5

Overview of Reading Achievement 5

Children's Reading Achievement and Parent Involvement.....14

III. METHODOLOGY 28

Description of the Participants 28

Instruments 28

SAT 29

O-LSAT 29

Parent Involvement Teacher-Made Questionnaire 29

Interview Questionnaire 29

Variables 29

Derivation of Hypotheses 29

General Hypothesis 1
(HG 1) 29

General Hypothesis 2
(HG 2) 29

General Hypothesis 3
(HG 3) 29

CHAPTER

III. METHODOLOGY (Continued)

Data Collection Procedures.....29

Data Analysis 30

Limitations of the Study 31

IV. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Results of the Tested Hypotheses 32

Hypothesis 1 and Statistics of Correlation 32

Hypothesis 2 and Statistics of Correlation 35

Hypothesis 3 and Statistics of Correlation 38

Interview Data 41

Summary of Findings 42

V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS 43

Summary of the Study 43

Statement of the Problem 43

Research Hypotheses 43

Statement of Procedures 44

Conclusions 44

Children's IQ and Their Reading Achievement 44

Parental Involvement and Children's Reading Achievement 44

Children's IQ and Parent Involvement 45

Implications 45

Implications for Parents and Teachers 45

Implications for Future Research 46

CHAPTER

V. RESULTS OF THE STUDY (Continued)

REFERENCES 47

APPENDIX A 48

APPENDIX B 50

List of Tables

Table Page

1. Parent Involvement and Reading Achievement 33

2. Children's IQ and Reading Achievement.....36

3. Children's IQ and Parent Involvement.....39

List of Figures

Figure Page

1. Relationship Between Parent Involvement and Reading Achievement Score.....34

2. Relationship Between Children's IQ and Reading Achievement Score.....37

3. Relationship Between Children's IQ and Parental Involvement Score.....40

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Learning to read can be a very complex and often undefinable process in which a child develops into an emerging reader. Many students do not reach their potential in reading, because they need additional guidance from their parents which they are not receiving.

Parental involvement can encompass many different aspects in the area of reading achievement. The initial involvement is during the preschool years. During this time, the total home environment influences emerging literacy. Parents are laying the foundation on which reading will grow and flourish. Later, during the early elementary years, parents continue to build upon this foundation, now working in conjunction with a teacher and a school system. The parents, at this point in time, not only reinforce what they have established in the home, but they may also become involved in the school setting as well. This literacy process which began as a very simple, one unit in the home, becomes a broader network as more individuals have an impact on the child's reading. How parents view this learning process from preschool throughout the elementary years, will determine how involved they want to be and also the outcome of their child's reading achievement.

Rasinski and Fredericks (1991) state the research shows that the instructional environments children are placed in can have a powerful impact on their growth in reading. Although this research focuses on school contexts for literacy instruction, it seems clear to us that home environments for reading and writing should be given at least equal consideration. Since elementary students, for the most part, spend more time at home than at school, it seems reasonable to encourage parents to create home environments that promote reading and writing. Environmental factors can contribute substantially to learning to read (McCartney, 1985).

The educational achievement of U.S. students has declined in recent years. Nationally, 14 percent of 8th-graders have less than basic reading skills (O'Brien, 1990). Our prisons and welfare rolls are filled with people who cannot read or write. That means the solution must be a multifront battle waged in the schools, in the streets, in the workplace, and in the home (Bush, 1989).

In light of the research studies which show that parents who involve themselves in the literacy acquisition of their children, parents need to see how important their role is in this achievement of reading, and teachers need to be able to help also.

Purpose of The Study

Throughout the past few years as a first grade teacher, it has been this educator's experience that many students are not achieving as highly as their capabilities would allow them in the subject of reading. These children are not easily motivated extrinsically, nor does this motivation seem to take hold on the

individual in an intrinsic way through teacher effort, praise, or time. These students do not have a positive attitude about reading which does affect their reading scores. This reaching of their highest potential seems to hinge on whether or not their parents are involved with their reading progress. As an educator, one needs to better understand relationships between parent involvement and children's reading achievement, in order to better serve these children and their parents.

Statement of The Problem

This study investigated the relationship between parent involvement and the reading achievement of twenty-two second grade students who attend a rural school district in Ohio. The purpose of this study was to determine whether there was a coorelationship between parental involvement and second graders' reading achievement. It also examined the relationship between children's IQ score and reading achievement.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Based on the review of literature related to parental involvement and observations made by this researcher as a teacher in a first grade classroom, the following general research questions and hypotheses were generated:

Research Questions

1. Is there a positive relationship between parental involvement and children's reading achievement?

2. Is there a positive relationship between children's IQ and their reading achievement?

3. Is there a positive relationship between parent involvement and children's IQ?

Hypotheses

1. There will be a positive correlation between parental involvement and children's reading achievement.

2. There will be a positive correlation between children's IQ and their reading achievement.

3. There will be a positive correlation between parent involvement and children's IQ.

Definition of Terms

1. Parental Involvement. The degree of which parents are involved in the education of their child, particularly in regards to preschool and the early elementary years; measured by a survey developed by the teacher.

2. Reading Achievement. The score of a student in the subject of reading; measured by the Standarized Achievement Test (SAT).

3. IQ. A measure of intelligence for an individual student; this is measured by the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (O-LSAT) given at the beginning of second grade.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

If a student reaches their highest potential in the area of reading, it seems to hinge on whether or not their parents are involved in their education. Parent involvement encompasses many areas: history of parental involvement, home environment and child factors such as IQ and gender, the teachers' perspective, the parents' perspective, the barriers to good involvement, how teachers can get parents involved, and ways parents can help.

Parents can make a tremendous difference in their child's success in school. The existing research indicates that given proper guidance and support, parents can supplement, in powerful fashion, learning that takes place in the school. Further, it is evidenced that the potential for parents to help their children in learning to read is tremendous (Rasinski & Fredericks, 1989).

Overview of Reading Achievement

Definition of Reading

Reading is the process of perceiving, interpreting, and evaluating printed material. It is one of the four major tools of communication: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It is usually silent, and it is receptive in nature. Foundations

for success in reading lie in the individual's development of skill in listening and speaking.

Reading requires the development of a meaningful vocabulary and a multiplicity of skills. The reader must be able to perceive and recognize written symbols; he must be able to associate concepts with written symbols. He must be able to understand both concrete and abstract ideas as they are presented in written form (Lapp & Flood, 1978).

Nurturing Literacy

Becoming a successful reader begins at birth. Young children learn about reading and writing as preschoolers in the home. Home literacy events are woven into the fabric of family life. Parents and siblings play a major role in shaping the kinds of literacy experiences of young children. These experiences are often informal, spontaneous, and playful-and rich in meaning (Schnick, 1990).

Literacy must be nurtured. Steffel (1985) states: "Nurturing literacy involves transactions and learning results from transactions" (p. 1). McCartney (1985) did a study on prereading and reading skills of early readers and non-early readers with above average intelligence. Results showed that early readers were more fluent and used more organized units of communication. Early readers walked and talked earlier, were slightly less physically coordinated, and showed an interest in words earlier.

Language learning is a highly complex developmental process by which young children learn to make sense of their world. Beginning at birth and continuing thereafter, it is expected that the young child's language development will be fostered and nurtured by his

parents. References abound in the literature which illustrate the critical role that the parent plays in nurturing, developing and expanding the young child's language (Russell, 1990).

Reading Aloud and Language Interaction

Reading aloud by the parent on a consistent basis has been recognized as a major influence in facilitating the loung child's language and literacy development. Through a variety of consistent read-aloud activities, the young child comes to know the world and ultimately learns to make sense of it (Russell, 1990). Reading aloud to children was one of the most effective activities parents could engage in with their children to promote achievement in and enjoyment of reading (Rasinski, & Fredericks, 1991).

Strickland and Morrow (1990) investigated the importance of reading-aloud. One teacher in their study writes:

> Researchers are coming to understand that repeated readings of stories help children become readers in very specific ways. As children hear a story again and again, they begin to memorize the text. Since book language differs from spoken language, they are also gaining an understanding of how literature sounds-that words remain the same each time the story is read, that different vocabulary may be used in writing than in speaking, that phrasing is different, and other aspects as well. They are becoming experts on that story. They know what will happen next and therefore become able to predict the text which will be read. (p. 73)

Not only does reading-aloud play a major role in the reading achievement of a child, so does language interaction. Freney (1990) examined the receptive language abilities of subjects identified as skilled and less skilled readers to determine if oral language comprehension might be a factor in reading deficits. There was strong support for the claim that less than expected receptive language skills could be a factor in the reading deficits of the

less skilled readers.

Predictors of Reading Achievement

Cancroft (1983) studied the characteristics of oral language of kindergarten children as predictors of beginning reading achievement. Analysis of the data indicated that the group of linguistic factors such as the number of sentences used, the length of the sentence, and the extent of the vocabulary, combined with the score on the readiness test was a slightly better predictor of beginning reading success as measured by the Standarized Achievement Test. Also, Aylor (1987) found in his study a statistically significant correlation between the presence and absence of linguistic awareness and reading achievement for the kindergarten and first-grade students and for the total group. These findings suggest that beginning reading instruction should give attention to the continued development and expansion of language concepts.

In a study by Scarborough, Dobrich, and Hager (1991) on preschool literacy experience and later reading achievement, the results suggest that by the time children entered school, those who became poor readers had accumulated substantially less experience with books and reading than those who became better readers.

Research by Taylor, Short, Frye, and Shrearer (1992) indicates the best way to break the cycle of failure poor readers experience in school is to identify and to provide remediation for these children as soon as possible. The program they observed was The Early Intervention in Reading. They concluded:

The Early Intervention in Reading Program has demonstrated

> that many low achievers at risk of experiencing reading difficulties in first grade, can instead experience success with the help of specially trained classroom teachers. It is important that intervention for these students begin early before the children fall behind in reading. It is essential that special instruction and support be provided on a regular basis throughout the year to ensure that these first-grade students successfully learn to read (p. 597)

Motivation and Reading

Motivation plays a major role in the early intervention of reading difficulties. In order for students to become self-confident and motivated, they have to feel they will not fail miserably and be worse off than when they started (Gaskins, 1992). Gaskins found research shows that passive failure and learned helplessness has revealed that repeated failure often leads to passivity, reduced confidence, and poor motivation to learn (Johnston & Winograd, 1985).

Children's successes are dependent, in part, on their beliefs that effort counts and that they are in control of academic progress. If the empetus for achievement is external to children, it is unlikely that they will develop feeling of self-esteem and repertoire of high-level metacognitive skills necessary for good performance. These attitudes, skills, and associated knowledge bases become increasingly important as the child advances academically, becoming critical for independent learning and creativity (Carr & Maxwell, 1991).

Grolnick, Ryan, and Deci (1991) investigated inner resources for school achievement. Their results showed inner processes are at work in student achievement. Contexts and curricula that conduce toward inner motivation rather than external control and toward

felt competence rather than objective evaluation seem to be important facilitators of successful educational climates and outcomes.

Effective motivation means children are engaged in the task, and engagement-total immersion and involvement-is necessary for learning to take place. As long as the task is relevant to kids, and they can see a real purpose, there is no need for external motivation. It does not always follow that a teacher initiated, "motivating" activity will engage children. Motivation and engagement are particularly important for the disadvantaged or reluctant reader. The smart, obedient students learn to read in spite of the method and materials. The lower-achieving students need the motivation and total engagement that a good book provides. These are the students who struggle with phonics. They need the meaning cues and memorableness that a predictable book provides to make sense of print (Routman, 1988).

If students are not read to, if day after day the only reading they hear is the drone of fellow members in the "turtle" reading group, they are certain to finish the year sounding like a "turtle." Trelease (1989) mentions to teachers that "we need to balance the scales and let children know through reading-aloud there is more to reading than worksheets-and we must do it before they close the door on reading for the rest of their lives" (p. 12).

Some of the techniques educators have used to help motivate students to read are: ability grouping for instruction, flexibility grouping, grouping by interest, teaching toward modality strengths, adjusting the school calendar to year-round instruction, refining

reading materials, and making learning fun.

Poor readers do little recreational reading. Thompson (1991) focused on students who counter that pattern, that is low achieving readers who read recreationally. Contrasting patterns between more active and less active readers were also noted, primarily related to attitude and intrinsic motivation for reading. Thompson found that children who had a reading "support system" that recognized the reader's competence, choice, and control in recreational reading, read more than children who lack such support. Related implications for supplementary literacy programs include attention to a program design that includes reader's choice and control while providing support and "friendly" accountability, and the training of parents and others on appropriate ways to share the pleasure of reading with children.

Research by Rasinski and Fredericks (1992) suggests that poor readers lack opportunities to practice reading and that they are often placed in environments that discourage reading. Rasinski and Fredericks (1991) did a study on paired reading and found that children engaging in paired reading for only 5 to 15 minutes a day make significant gains in fluency and comprehension.

Children who are not told stories and who are not read to will have few reasons for wanting to learn to read (Trelease, 1989). Linek (1992) did a study about teacher attitudes and student attitudes toward reading. He states that "reading research has generally shown that poor readers have more negative attitudes toward reading and good readers have more positive attitudes toward reading" (p.1).

Good and Poor Readers

In a longitudinal study by Lees (1989) about the cognitive analysis of reading and its development, poor readers were shown to be moving towards the same goal as other readers in terms of the mechanisms involved in fluent reading. Poor readers do not develop their use of context as a compensatory strategy in order to get around problems with phonology. Initial problems in the poor readers reflect a developmental delay rather than a specific deficit. This study assessed the subskills of on-going word recognition, nonword pronunciation, phonological segmentation, lexical decision, visual matching, and semantic decision tasks.

Multiple factors influence an emerging reader's successful program in literacy acquisition. The most notable factors observed were the influence of oral language behaviors, print awareness behaviors, linking behaviors, and risk-taking behaviors. It seems that when children are provided with appropriate text, appropriate strategy intervention based on informed teaching decisions and one-to-one tutoring, they will progress and move toward inner control of the reading process (Frasier, 1991).

Frasier (1991) also stated that "good readers swiftly and unconsciously orchestrate a range of effective strategies. But poor readers tend to use a narrow range of strategies and to use them ineffectively" (p. 1).

The following conclusions were generated in a study by Brannon (1991) about the perceptions of the reading process and learning to read: (1) early social interactions with parents in storytelling nurtured a love of reading, confidence in learning to read,

encouragement and acceptance in the process of becoming a reader and establishing a positive attitude toward reading, (2) exposure to books where parents enhanced the good reader's understanding of language convention, concepts of print and the language used to talk about reading, (3) the school context and the teacher's language and behaviors influenced the good reader's perceptions of reading and learning to read, (4) interest, self-confidence and motivation appeared to be of primary importance in becoming a good reader, (5) good readers perceived themselves to be good readers when they were free to self-select books and actively pursue knowledge on their own, (6) the good readers shared common understandings and beliefs about learning to read and the reading process. From the good readers' perspectives, reading empowered them to become active learners.

Phonemic awareness also plays a role in reading achievement. Phonemic awareness is strongly related to success in beginning reading and can be developed in children as early as their preschool years through a variety of stimulating language activities. These activities, however, are not intended to replace children's interactions with meaningful language and print (Yopp, 1992). Phonemic awareness is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for reading success (Winsor, 1990).

Sollengerger (1991) attempted to identify variables which may help to explain differences in second grade reading achievement. A central concern of this study was to examine the extent to which qualitative aspects of children's home environment may be related to reading achievement. Scores on the Metropolitan Reading Test

(MRT) emerged as the most significant predictor of second grade achievement. Significant relationships were also found between reading achievement and parental interest and supportiveness during children's kindergarten and first grade year in school, reading related experiences at home before school entrance, and reading related experiences at home after school entrance.

Learning to read is a very complex process. This process not only involves a strong parental support system, but also a strong educational system in which teachers are continually learning better and more efficient approaches to teach not only the advanced and able readers, but also the unmotivated readers. With a strong support system, the child can become a successful reader.

Children's Reading Achievement and Parent Involvement

In 1991, the National Committee for Citizens in Education published an annotated bibliography, The Evidence Grows, which described 35 studies on the subject. The findings of all the studies were positive: parent involvement in almost any form appears to produce measurable gains in student achievement (Henderson, 1988).

His study showed that schools with higher levels of achievement have considerably greater parent involvement. Some of the major benefits of parent involvement include higher grades and test scores, better long-term academic achievement, positive attitudes and behavior, more successful programs, and more effective schools.

Getting parents involved in their children's reading, regardless of the intensity or type of involvement, leads to improvement in

students' ability to read and can lead to improvement in students' interest in and enjoyment of reading. In short, if teachers want to improve students' reading performance, it makes great sense to get parents involved (Rasinski & Fredericks, 1989).

History of Parental Involvement

Parents were the most important educators of their children as long ago as prehistoric times. As civilization developed, children continued to receive their first education in their home. Later, the first formal education outside the home emerged as early as 3787-1580 B.C. The Greek society saw children as the future bearer of the culture. During the Middle Ages, from 400-1400 A.D. formal education was kept alive by the church (Berger, 1991). By the seventeenth century in Western societies, the recognition of the importance of children's interaction with their parents and other caregivers emerged. John Comenius (1593-1670) brought forth new ideas about children. He said:

> It is the nature of everything that comes into being, that while tender it is easily bent and formed, but that, when it has grown hard, it is not easy to alter. Wax, when soft, can be easily fashioned and shaped: when hard it cracks readily. (p. 210-211)

In the United States, parent involvement in the education of their children is a fairly recent phenomenon. During the seventeenth century, school-parent roles were clearly defined. Schools taught reading, writing, and arithmetic: home and church taught moral development (O'Brien, 1990).

Parents' roles in the schools have really changed during the past thirty years. Some of this change can be traced to legislation policy and research in the 1960's on poverty. Head start evolved

from this and led the way for lower income parents to be involved in educating their children.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, teacher education requirements also increased. Perhaps due to the increase in the teachers' professionalism, the parent involvement declined. Parent-Teacher Associations flourished during this time, but just for major events like raising funds. The move from local to state control of education has weakened the home/school relationship even more.

During the 1990's schools and parents face a challenge to work together for the success of the children. Children need this kind of collaborative support to succeed. The emerging alliance between homes and schools comes from the recognition that not only are schools important to parents and families, but that schools also need the support of parents in order to achieve optimum success (Berger, 1991).

Parent involvement of today has its roots in the parent involvement of the past. The direction it takes will be influenced by the past and also the changes in the future as well. Children are a nation's future. The hope of that future lies in the acknowledgement by schools and society alike that parents must be involved with their children's education if our nation is to continue flourishing (Berger, 1991).

Home Environment

In addition to parent involvement evolving through the centuries, the home environment has also been continuously changing. The high divorce rate has forced many single mothers into the workforce

in order to provide for their children. The 1980 census revealed that 50% of our children would spend at least some time in a single parent family home by the year 2000 (Fredericks, Rasinski, & Ritty, 1992). Also, about 90% of children living with one parent live with the mother, as do most children of never-married women (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1986).

Demographic and other changes in the society have made the connection between school and home more fragile. Sixty percent of today's students live in families in which the lone parent or both parents work outside the home (Gough, 1991).

Gough (1991) found that working mothers help as much with school work and other forms of participation with student learning as do nonemployed mothers, even in the early adolescent years. Working parents prefer projects taking intense effort for a set time. Very few working parents will volunteer for committees which meet regularly to no defined purpose.

The school can be successful involving working parents, but it begins with a positive attitude toward them. Working parents are likely to become involved with the school if the conditions are right for them.

Not only is the high divorce rate and parents working outside the home having an effect on the parents, it is also having an effect on the children. According to Waldron (1983):

> Children residing in homes where there is recent trauma within the year, perform less well in reading comprehension than do children residing within more stable family patterns of greater than one year. Therefore, children undergoing trauma in the year score less well in the complex cognitive act of reading than children from stable families. (p. 1)

Another home environmental factor in parent involvement is

the educational level of the parents. Generally, the educational level of the parents predicts more of the variance in student achievement than do other family background variables, particularly for younger children. The higher the educational status of the mother, the greater the degree of parent involvement in school activities (Stevenson & Baker, 1987).

The educational level of the mother indicates the mother's experience and knowledge of how one can progress through the educational system, and therefore involvement of a more educated mother in the school career of the child may be more effective. Stevenson and Baker (1987) found that more educated mothers knew about their child's performance, had more contact with teachers, and were more likely to have taken action when necessary to manage their child's academic achievement.

Studies have shown that poor reading skills are an intergenerational problem. Parents who cannot read tend to raise children who cannot read, and the educational level in general achieved by children tends to reflect the educational level of their parents, especially their mother (Bush, 1989). Walde and Baker (1990) explain that "parents who lack basic reading, writing, and mathematical skills cannot be expected to help their children learn these skills at home." (p. 320)

More parents said they could help if they had more education or if their children were in lower elementary grades where parents needed less specialized knowledge to help the children. Parents with less education reported significantly more frequent requests from teachers than did parents with average or advanced education

(Epstein, 1986).

Although Becker and Epstein (1982) found that teachers tried to equally involve educated as well as less educated parents, some educators see the level of parent education from a different perspective. One teacher in this study said:

> I don't feel the educational level of the parents play too great a part, because in my experience I've had tremendous parent involvement with those whose educational level did not go beyond the eighth grade. (p. 107)

This may suggest some discrepancy among teacher opinion on this subject.

Another home environmental factor is verbal interaction in the home. The purpose of a study done by Gunter (1986) was to explore and derive one aspect of the home environment that appears relevant to language development and subsequent reading readiness success: the verbal interactions of employed and non-employed mothers and their young children who had achieved reading readiness success. Gunter concluded that it is the home environment and what parents, mothers specifically, do that play a major role in the language development and reading readiness of young children. Employed and non-employed mothers regard verbal interaction and shared activity variables to be of substantial importance. It can be assumed both groups of mothers considered the kinds of interactions valuable with respect to quality time spent with their preschool children.

Most teachers also feel that verbal interaction is a very important part in getting children to read. Most teachers place importance on the development of students' abilities to express themselves orally (Aylor, 1987).

Television is yet another home environmental factor. Television can be an avenue which the parent can discuss with their child about the viewing of a particular show. This can not only increase verbal interaction, but it can also increase memory skills, sequencing the story skills, and listening skills. All of these are reading skills.

In order to find if a reading program entitled Books and Beyond would alter student television viewing time or had an effect on academic achievement in the area of reading, Niemeyer (1987) observed grades three and five. Negative relationships were found between recreational reading time and television viewing time for all students; a significant positive relationship between recreational reading time and reading achievement for fifth grade students was also discovered.

Not only are home environmental factors contributors, so are child factors. Parents who are more involved in school activities are more likely to have children who are performing well in school. These relations are essentially the same for boys and girls (Stevenson & Baker, 1987).

The average parental involvement for girls is slightly, though not significantly, higher for boys. Also, the mother's educational level and age of the child are more positively related to parent involvement in schooling for boys than girls (Stevenson & Baker, 1987).

Based on a study done by Hoffman (1984), differences in achievement and attitude toward reading of elementary students receiving supplementary computer assisted instruction and students

receiving traditional instruction were observed. It was found that females were more positive toward reading than males. Differences in gender contributed significantly to student attitude toward reading.

IQ is another child factor. Howlett (1987) in a study of reading aptitude, reading achievement and school achievement, found that perceptual speed and accuracy are strongly related to first grade reading achievement and they are important predictors of later achievement. Much of the variance accounted for by subject achievement scores may be attributable to IQ.

Teacher Perspective on Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is often determined by how the teacher feels about parents being active in the education of their children. Some teachers feel very negatively about any interaction with parents due to many antagonistic and unpleasant conversations with parents about their child. Other teachers feel it is a vital part of complete education for children to obtain maximum success. It is the teacher who determines how acceptable parent involvement is in the classroom.

There are potential advantages, but there are also potential problems with any parent involvement technique. Teachers' comments reveal their contrasting opinions on the benefits expected from parent assistance at home and on the organizational structures used to conduct parent involvement activities. Some teachers are very positive about parent involvement; others have been discouraged by their attempt to communicate and work with parents (Epstein & Becker, 1982).

One teacher said, "I really rely on parent help. Long ago

I realized that only with parent help can my job be performed adequately." (Epstein & Becker, 1982) Another said:

> Although my teaching career is near a close, I believe parent involvement is one of the keys to improving education and it should be encouraged. It will not only promote better pupil performance, but it will improve the self-image of each pupil especially in a school community. (p. 106)

Yet another teacher said,

> Most parents talk a good story but rarely follow through on any involvement. Then there are some, who given prodding, guidance, and a great deal of specific directions on what to do, will try consistently to help their child. It pays off, even if the results are minimal. It is for these few that it is worth doing what we can to get them involved, because it is ultimately for the children. (p. 105)

Teachers felt that most parents are interested in the schooling of their children and will do what is suggested, according to Melton (1985). They expressed concern however, over family pressures that affect follow-through. While both parents and teachers described a parent-teacher relationship based on problems, both expressed a desire for more positive grounds upon which to base the relationship.

Even when parents do show enough concern to talk to teachers, the outlook for parent involvement is not always promising (Walde & Baker, 1990). Teachers report having the most contact with parents of children with learning and discipline problems and with parents who are already active in the school (Becker & Epstein, 1982). Some teachers admitted that they fear parents, and this fear inhibits the kinds of programs teachers attempt (Epstein & Becker, 1982).

Some teachers were troubled by parents who just didn't care about their child's education. They felt like babysitters. Others

were bothered by parents who do not take responsibility for the basic needs of their children so they could learn easier while in school.

Yet there are other teachers who feel negatively toward volunteers, undependability, low commitment, and lack of time to prepare for the parent training to be able to teach. One teacher said:

> I believe both parents and students can benefit from parent involvement. However, I also know that it take a great deal of training and explaining and coordinating to have a good program. I have spent many hours doing just this. We are not provided with time to do this type of training. It is all our own time. I no longer feel like giving my time without compensation. (p. 104)

Parents' Perspective on Parental Involvement

Parents also have a perspective on parent involvement worth noting. Teacher practices of parent involvement maximize cooperation and minimize antagonism between teachers and parents and enhance the teachers' professional standing from the parents' perspective. Epstein (1986) found that most parents (94%) disagreed with the statement "it is not the teacher's business" to show parents how to help their child learn at home. When teachers frequently used home learning activities, parents rated them as more skillful teachers. Because these analyses are based on classroom-level averages from reports of the parents of all children in the classroom, the results do not reflect personal favoritism in the relationships of a few parents and teachers. According to parents, teachers who were leaders in the use of parent involvement practice established more equitable programs, involving parents regardless of their educational backgrounds. Teachers who were not leaders

in parent involvement did not try to reach all parents.

Despite positive attitudes about schools and teachers in general, parents reported that teachers could do more to involve parents in learning activities at home. About 58% of the parents rarely or never received requests from the teachers to become involved in learning activities at home. Fewer than 30% of the parents reported that teachers gave them many ideas of how to help their child in reading and math. They overwhelmingly agreed that teachers should involve parents in learning activities at home and that homework was useful for their children. Over 80% of the parents said they could spend more time helping their children at home if they were shown how to do specific learning activities (Epstein, 1986).

Parents are interested in active participation in the education of their children and they work with their children at home often without suggestions from teachers. They use strategies they used in school. They expressed a desire to know whether or not they are doing the right things with their children, to hear the "truth" about their children's progress, to receive information more often, to get more suggestions, and hear positive comments as well as negative. They also stressed their desire for the teacher to know their child (Melton, 1985).

Despite the typical profusion of notices from school to home, some parents receive few communications from teachers. In a Maryland sample, about 16% of the parents said they received no memos from their child's teacher, over 35% had no parent-teacher conference, and about 60% never spoke to the teacher on the phone.

About 70% never helped the teacher in the classroom or on class trips. About 70% never participated in fund-raising activities for the school. About 88% never assisted in the library, cafeteria, or other school areas. Even those parents who did become active were involved infrequently (Epstein, 1986).

Parents, also perceived that some teachers are willing to confirm parent involvement, while others do not seem to want parents to help.

Barriers to Good Parent Involvement

There are several barriers to good parent involvement. Antagonistic, unpleasant contacts between school and parents are the result of passivity on the part of the school. If the school waits for parents to initiate contact, the contact is likely to be about a problem, and potentially antagonistic (Coleman, 1991). The nature of this "parents-as-the-probe" notion is multifaceted. Teachers have described pushy and overly aggressive parents, parents who are difficult to contact, and parents who resist teachers' recommendations. Teachers have likewise described parents who neglect their children intellectually as well as physically, and parents who attempt to censor the reading material in the classroom (Rasinski, 1989).

Another barrier to good parent involvement is that many parents are occupied with other matters and will not become involved unless it satisfies an interest. Some parents do not value the education of their children, and yet others feel powerless to influence the school.

How Teachers Can Get Parents Involved

One way to overcome barriers to parent involvement is through a principal who sees the importance of it (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). There are seven elements of Strong Parent Involvement Programs (Williams & Chavkin, 1989). These are: written policies, administrative support, training, partnership approach, two-way communication, networking, and evaluation.

Effective parent involvement programs acknowledge the fact that parents are a child's earliest and most influential teachers. Trying to educate the young without the help and support from the home is akin to trying to rake leaves in a high wind (Fredericks & Rasinski, 1990).

There are three levels of increasing parental involvement. Monitoring, informing, and participation. Monitoring refers to being aware of the school situation. At this level activities are informal chats, personal letters, and questionnaires between the teacher and parents. Informing means apprising parents about the policies, procedures, aims, and expectations that exist in the school classroom. The communication between teacher and parents becomes more formal at this level. These may include parent-teacher conferences, newsletters, and calendars. Finally, participation is the level at which parents become actively involved in the classroom. Under the guidance of the classroom teacher, parents become members of the classroom community, making a variety of contributions.

Ways Parents Can Help Their Child

Lastly, there are many ways parents can help their child.

They may range from involvement at the school such as: parent-teacher conferences, cafeteria worker, library helper, parent academic assistant, P.T.O. officer, fieldtrip chaperone, or office assistant. There are many ways a parent can help at home to guide their child. These may include parents who: discuss a television program with their child, model good reading habits in front of them, read to their child often, talk to their child about school and stories they have read, use computers to teach reading, have high expectations of the educational achievement of their child, read aloud to their child, make the home environment a literate one, become actively concerned about the child's education, spend quality time with the child, have reading materials available in the home, connect reading and real-life experiences, and encourage writing.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants in this study were twenty-two white, second grade students from mainly middle-class homes who attended an elementary school in a rural community in southeastern Ohio. Students ranged in age from 6-8 years old. This selection was based on this educator's opportunity to observe first-hand the amount of parent involvement in the class on an individual basis as well as a classroom consensus. There were 11 girls and 11 boys.

Instruments

Each individual student was given a survey to take home to their parents that pertained to parent involvement with reading. The survey was devised by this researcher. This survey asked parents questions about daily reading at home with their child. They were also asked about the home environmental factors such as: 1) mothers who worked outside the home, 2) television viewing and discussion with their child, 3) the verbal interactions in the home between parents and the child, and 4) the educational level of the parents. The survey was scored on a scale of 1-4, with a four indicating the higher degree of parental involvement.

Each student's individual reading score on the Standarized

Achievement Test was collected, as well as each student's individual IQ score from the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test.

The SAT is a test given to all second graders in the beginning of their second grade year to measure individual student achievement in the areas of Reading, Math, Language, Spelling, Environment, and Listening. The purpose of the test is to see the achievement level of each student, and to see how each student compares to the national norm. The results help school administrators and teachers observe how the students in a school compare with the national norm.

The O-LSAT is a test given at the beginning of the second grade year to measure the IQ of each student. Verbal and nonverbal IQ are tested and averaged for a total IQ score. This nationally administered test gives educators the opportunity to see the capabilities of each student.

Data Collection Procedures

Each of the twenty-two students was given a parental involvement survey to take home to their parents in April of their second grade year. The SAT and the O-LSAT were given to all second grade students in the beginning of their second grade year. Each second grade teacher administered the tests to their own classroom as a whole group. The tests were given at the beginning of each school day for an entire week in October. After the tests were scored by the test publishers, they were returned to the school. This researcher then collected the results from the tests from each second grade teacher in December of the same year.

Data Analysis

Correlational analysis was used as a method to analyze the relationship between parent involvement and children's reading achievement. It was also used to analyze the relationship between children's IQ and their reading achievement, and children's IQ and parent involvement.

The number of students participating in the study was 22 second grade students. The total number of surveys returned were 16 (n = 16) due to students moving away and some who did not return the survey.

The range of scores on the parent involvement survey were 67-87. The mode, mean, and median were all 78 which indicated a normal distribution. Standard deviation was 5. Results were placed on a scatterplot to see the correlation between parent involvement and children's reading achievement. Pearson r ($r = .16$) was computed and no significant correlation was found.

The participants had IQ scores ranging from 68-121. The mean score was 99, and the median was 102. Standard deviation was 15. A scatterplot was used to show the correlation between IQ and reading achievement. The calculated Pearson r was .69 ($df = 14$, $a = .05$) and there was no significant correlation between children's IQ score and their reading achievement.

Children's IQ scores and parental involvement scores were also placed on a scatterplot. The Pearson r ($r = .02$) was not significant at $a = .05$.

Perhaps if more students had returned their questionnaires, correlationship between parent involvement and reading achievement

would have been different. Also, had there been more subjects, the results would have been different.

Limitations of the Study

The number of students who were involved in this study was reduced due to three students moving away and three students not returning the questionnaire. The sample size was too small.

Scores on the SAT and O-LSAT are highly accurate, unless a student was not good at taking tests, or had a bad day. The tests were also administered at the beginning of the second grade, not at the end of their first grade year. Data collection would have been closer to 100% participation due to more immediate teacher communication with parents.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

This chapter has been organized into two sections. The first section involves information pertaining to each hypothesis that was tested. This includes data analysis of each hypothesis, and descriptive statistics. The second section is a summary of qualitative findings of this research project.

Results of the Tested Hypotheses

Results of the Research Hypothesis Related to Parent Involvement and Children's Reading Achievement.

It was hypothesized that there would be a positive correlationship between parental involvement and children's reading achievement. The mean for parent involvement (N = 16) was 78, with standard deviation of 5. The mean for reading achievement (N = 16) was 545 with standard deviation of 35 (see Table 1). Pearson r was calculated to test the hypothesis, and the result was r = .16 (df=14, a = .05) which was not significant (see Figure 1). Therefore, the hypothesis was not supported, and it was concluded that there was no significant correlation between parent involvement and children's IQ scores.

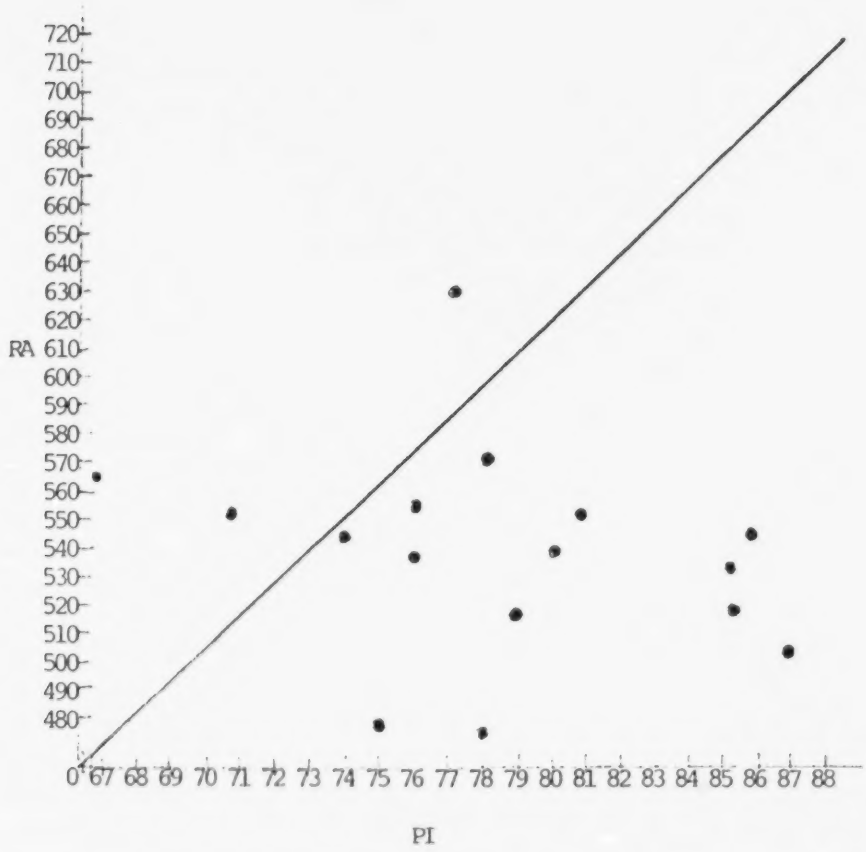
Table 1

Parent Involvement(PI) and Reading Achievement(RA)

Students	PI	RA
1	75	486
2	78	579
3	67	567
4	80	545
5	74	548
6	86	525
7	79	525
8	81	560
9	78	481
10	78	637
11	76	540
12	71	551
13	86	550
14	87	513
15	76	560
16	85	545
Mean	78	545
St. D	5	35

Fig. 1

Parent Involvement(PI) and Reading Achievement(RA)



notes: r = .16, df = 14, not significant at a = .05

Results of the Research Hypothesis Related to IQ and Reading Achievement.

It was hypothesized that there would be a positive correlationship between children's IQ and their reading achievement. The mean for IQ (N = 16) was 99 with standard deviation of 15. The mean for reading achievement (N = 16) was 545, with standard deviation of 35 (see Table 2). Pearson r was calculated to test the hypothesis and the result was r = .69, df = 14, which is significant at a = .05 (see Fig. 2). This suggests that students with higher IQ's perform better in reading. The hypothesis was supported and it was concluded that there is significant positive correlation between IQ and reading achievement.

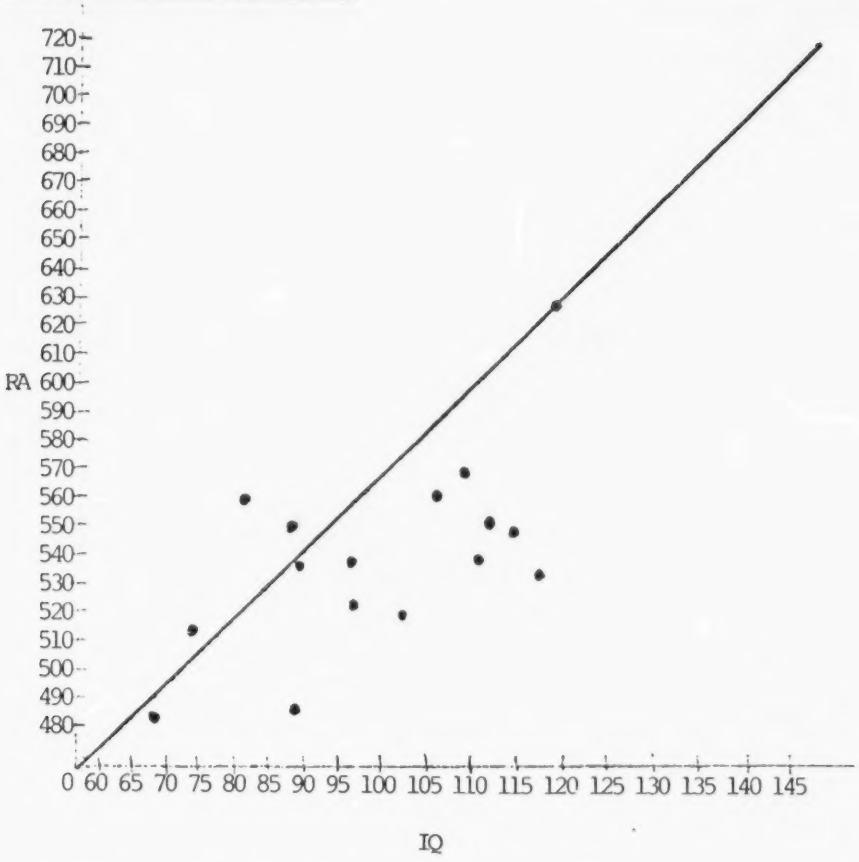
Table 2

IQ and Reading Achievement(RA)

Students	IQ	RA
1	87	486
2	110	579
3	107	567
4	119	545
5	112	548
6	104	525
7	99	525
8	111	560
9	68	481
10	121	637
11	90	540
12	89	551
13	115	550
14	75	513
15	84	560
16	98	545
Mean	99	545
St. D	15	35

Fig. 2

IQ and Reading Achievement(RA)



notes: r = .69, df = 14, significant at a = .05

Results of the Research Hypothesis Related to Parent Involvement and Children's IQ.

It was hypothesized that there would be a positive correlationship between parental involvement and children's IQ. The mean for parent involvement (N = 16) was 78, with standard deviation of 5. The mean for IQ (N = 16) was 99, with standard deviation of 15 (see Table 3). Pearson r was calculated to test the hypothesis, and the result is r = .02, df = 14, which is not significant at a = .05 (see Fig. 3). Therefore, the hypothesis was not supported, and it is concluded that there is no significant correlation between parent involvement and children's IQ scores.

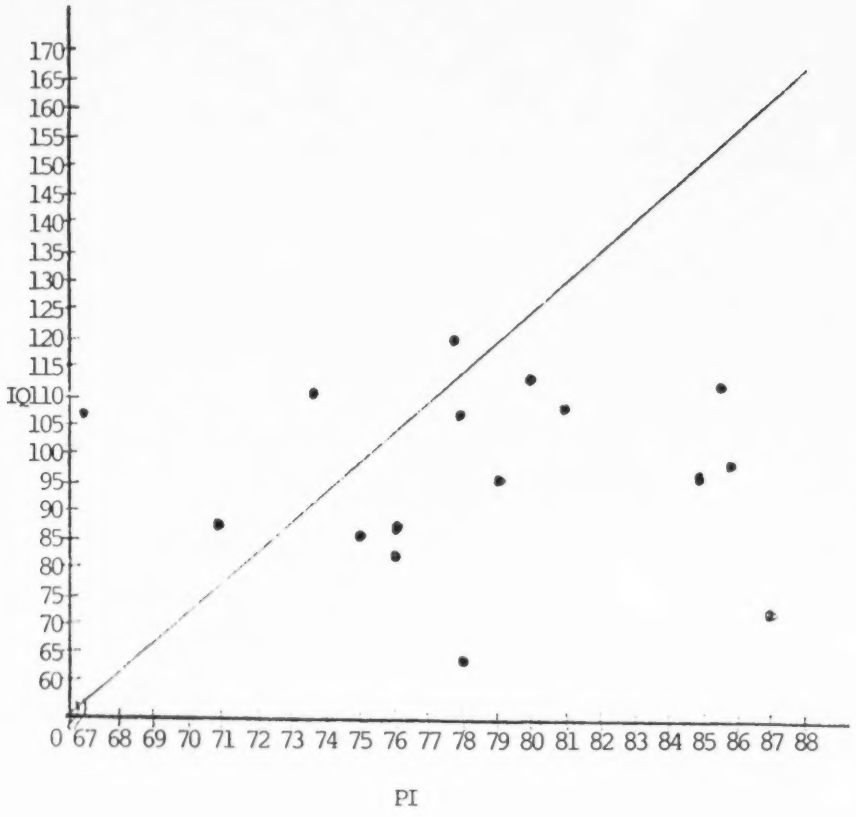
Table 3

Children's IQ and Parent Involvement(PI)

Students	IQ	PI
1	87	75
2	110	78
3	107	67
4	119	80
5	112	74
6	104	86
7	99	79
8	111	81
9	68	78
10	121	78
11	90	76
12	89	71
13	115	86
14	75	87
15	84	76
16	98	85
Mean	99	78
St. D	15	5

Fig. 3

Children's IQ and Parental Involvement(PI)



notes: r = .02, df = 14, not significant at a = .05

To further understand parental involvement two parents were also interviewed using parent involvement questions (see Appendix B). The interviews began with the question, "What do you think parent involvement is?" Both informants said that it is being aware of what their child is learning in school, giving them extra help and encouragement they need, reading to them and listening to them read, and staying in touch with the teacher about concerns along the way. One informant said:

> Parent involvement is being bold enough to ask questions if we are confused about our child's development. (INFOR. 1)

When asked how they nurtured reading in their home before the school years, both responded by saying they read to their children each evening. It was an activity shared by one parent, usually the mother, and all the children in the family. One informant mentioned going to the library and checking out 20 books almost every week from the preschool years to the present.

Both informants emphasized very strongly that caring parents are a very important part of parent involvement.

One informant felt that reading was a natural-born interest in their daughter, and the other informant felt their son loved to read as long as he enjoyed it and could choose the reading material that was of interest to him.

T.V. for one informant was not important as an educational tool. The other informant used T.V. on a regular basis for video tapes about morals, ethics, Bible stories, and Sesame Street.

Both provided a home environment with pencils, paper, and markers. These items were made accessible to the children.

Both informants were highly active within the school setting as well. Both felt that verbal interaction with their child was very important. Also, the informants had a strong belief in working in collaboration with the teacher in a positive way, so that concerns could be dealt with in a positive fashion.

The educational level of one father was a Master's degree, and the mother was a high school graduate. Within this home, the father worked and the mother was not employed outside the home.

The other set of parents both worked, and the mother had a Master's degree. The father had a high school diploma. Although this mother's time was limited to employment outside the home, she was involved when she could be.

Summary of Findings

It was concluded from the interviews that parents who take an interest in their child's education, have children who appear to be more interested and more motivated to learn. Perhaps this would suggest that parents who take an interest in their child's education, during preschool and through the elementary years, do make a positive impact on their children's educational achievement.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This chapter is divided into three major sections. A summary of the study is presented by reviewing the problem, hypotheses and procedures. The conclusions section is organized into two areas: (a) discussion of the research findings related to the significance of IQ and reading achievement, and (b) discussion of the research hypotheses rejected by the researcher. The chapter follows with a section pertaining to implications of the study for parents, and teachers, and implications for future research.

Summary of the Study

Statement of the Problem

This study focused on parent involvement as it related to reading achievement. Many students do not reach their highest potential in reading; they need additional help and support from their parents which they do not receive.

Research Hypotheses

This study involved three hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: There is a no significant correlation between parent involvement and children's reading achievement.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a positive correlation between children's

IQ and their reading achievement.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a positive correlation between children's IQ and parent involvement.

Statement of Procedures

The research design used in this study was post hoc correlational design. Data were collected on children's IQ scores, reading achievement scores, parent involvement, and two parent interviews were also conducted. Hypotheses were generated from literature review and teacher observations.

The subjects involved in the study were 16 first grade students who attended a rural, southeastern Ohio elementary school. All students who completed the SAT, O-LSAT and returned the questionnaire were actually included in the results. Each hypothesis was tested using the Pearson r procedure.

Conclusions

Children's IQ and Their Reading Achievement

Hypothesis 2 was accepted and it was concluded that there is a significant positive correlation between children's IQ and their reading achievement. This suggests that students with higher IQ scores tend to score higher on reading achievement.

Parental Involvement and Children's Reading Achievement

Hypothesis 1 was rejected due to no positive significant correlation between parent involvement and reading achievement. It was concluded that a child who has parents who are involved in their education will not necessarily achieve higher reading

achievement as a result of their parents' involvement. This finding was inconsistent with many earlier studies (Brannon, 1991, Thompson, 1991). Perhaps this was due to a very small sample size. How the questionnaire was answered with individual perceptions of parent involvement may also have been a major factor.

Children's IQ and Parental Involvement

Hypothesis 3 was rejected, and it was concluded that there was no significant correlation between parent involvement and children's IQ. Therefore, it was concluded that children with higher IQ scores do not necessarily have parents who are more involved in their education.

Implications

Implications for Parents and Teachers

This researcher has attempted to report the findings of this information about parent involvement. Even though parent involvement and reading achievement did not result in a significant positive relationship in this particular study, does not suggest it is unimportant. All the other studies showed that with parent involvement, students do achieve higher results in school. The small sample size had too great an impact on the results of this study. Parent involvement in its many forms can increase student achievement according to many previous studies.

Implications for Future Research

In obtaining parent involvement information, it is suggested that a larger sample size be used to measure reading achievement. Also, qualitative methodology should be used to gather information. It might prove interesting to follow an entire grade level in a longitudinal study from birth to the beginning of second grade.

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APPENDIX A

The purpose of this study is to help understand parent involvement in education. Your time and input are appreciated. Circle the letter that pertains to your situation.

A=Always
B=Frequently
C=Occasionally
D=Seldom

A B C D 1. I read daily to my child as a preschooler.

A B C D 2. After reading a story to my child, I related the story to real-life experiences.

A B C D 3. After reading a story to my child, we talked about it.

A B C D 4. My child and I reread favorite books.

A B C D 5. My preschooler and I went to the library.

A B C D 6. I bought books for my preschooler.

A B C D 7. Pens, markers, and paper were available in our home.

A B C D 8. I enjoy talking to my child, and having my child talk to me.

A B C D 9. Before kindergarten, I helped my child learn their ABC's.

A B C D 10. I volunteer at the school in the cafeteria, library, or at the crosswalks.

A B C D 11. I guide my child at home through homework and reading.

A B C D 12. I give my child my undivided attention for at least 15 minutes a day.

A B C D 13. I take classes to further my own education.

A B C D 14. I have high educational expectations for my child.

A B C D 15. I talk to my child's teachers to see how I can best help my child.

A B C D 16. I like when teachers give suggestions on how to help my child with their education.

A B C D 17. I enjoy getting newletters from my child's teachers.

A B C D 18. Parent/Teacher Conferences are helpful.

A B C D 19. I want to be informed if my child is having difficulty in school so I can help them.

A B C D 20. After viewing a T.V. show with my child, I discuss the program with my child.

A B C D 21. I let my child choose books he/she wants to read.

A B C D 22. My child sees me reading for my own enjoyment.

A B C D 23. I have given my child opportunities to learn about the world around them by taking them places.

A B C D 24. When my child becomes curious about the world around them, I answer their questions.

Child's Name _____

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

!. What do you think parent involvement in education is?

2. What do you see as good parent involvement in most children's education?

3. What do you think is good parent involvement for your child?

4. In what ways did you nurture reading in your home before the school years began?

5. What ways did you nurture reading after your child started going to school?

6. Are there specific factors that you feel have greatly contributed to your child's reading success? What are they?

7. Has T.V. been a tool used in your home for educational use?

8. Does your child have access to pens, markers and paper at home?

9. Do you help at the school in any way?

10. Do you and your child interact with each other a lot?

11. How important do you see working with the teacher in order to help your child succeed?

12. Are there specific things that parents and teachers can do to help the child succeed?